

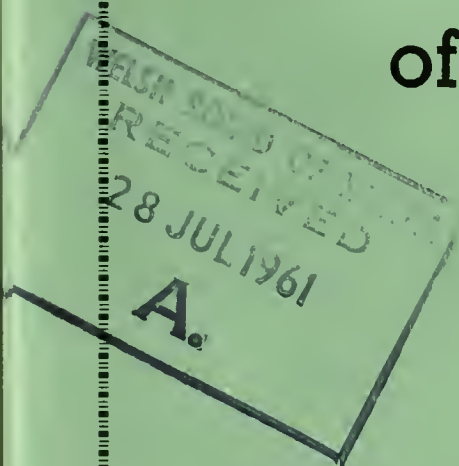
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Rhayader  
Rural District Council



Annual Report  
of the  
Medical Officer  
of Health



For the Year 1960



# Members of the Council

## Year 1960

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*Chairman :* Alderman E. T. KINSEY MORGAN, J.P.

*Vice-Chairman :* R. P. L. HUGHES, C.C.

### *Councillors :*

D. H. Bound	S. E. Lloyd
O. P. Davies	G. D. Morgan, C.C.
J. E. L. Griffiths	A. E. Oakley
R. E. P. Jones	A. H. Price
R. T. Knill, C.C.	J. T. L. Price
I. J. Lewis	W. A. Probert
Major. Gen. R. S. Lewis,	I. Thomas
C.B., O.B.E.	A. Thompson
V. Lewis	F. G. White

### *Committees :*

Public Health and Housing—All members of the Council

*Chairman :* Councillor O. P. Davies

Finance—All members of the Council

*Chairman :* Councillor Major Gen. R. S. Lewis, C.B., O.B.E.

### *Medical Officer of Health :*

J. DAVIES, M.B., B.Ch., B.Sc.

(Medical Practitioner and part-time M.O.H.)

Telephone: Rhayader 31

### *Public Health Inspector :*

G. H. ROBERTS, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

(Certs.—S.I.E.J.B. and Meat and Other Foods of R.S.H.)

### *Council Offices :*

Dolgerddon Hall, Rhayader

Telephone: Rhayader 9

BRYNCOED,  
RHAYADER,  
RADNOR.  
22nd June, 1961

To the Chairman and Members of the  
Rural District Council of Rhayader

Sirs,

I have the honour to present to you the Annual Report for the year 1960. This is prepared in accordance with the instructions received from the Welsh Board of Health each year.

One of the increasing social and public health problems of the present day is the care of the aged. They are often condemned by their circumstances to occupy the worst of the available accommodation, often lacking in the essential amenities and at a level below modern standards.

Institutional care is rarely desired and their prime requirements are :--

- (1) a home where they can have independence without loneliness,
- (2) something to do to give them still a purpose for living, and here some form of domiciliary occupational therapy would be of tremendous value.
- (3) someone to look after them in their own homes during minor illnesses. The district nurses have always played a major part in their care but there is a limit to their time. The home help service should be available in such cases but, as a service in this area, it is almost non-existent due to the lack of people available to undertake this work.

Their welfare should be prominent in any new housing project and the Council's decision to build some dwellings for old people will be a source of satisfaction. Moreover, the County Authority have plans for a small Old People's Home in the town.

During the year a Health Visitor was appointed to our district. Previously the work, which she now undertakes, was shared among the district nurses. She has a specialised knowledge of the welfare of the old and young (in addition to being a fully qualified nurse and midwife) and her work with us has already proved itself to be of immense value.

The proposed new housing scheme for 45 houses should remove the demand for the poorer houses and help to solve the housing problem in this part of the district.

In outlying parts, the rise in living standards has resulted in a smaller demand for isolated primitive cottages, and tenancies

tend to lapse as the older people die and the younger people withdraw to the villages. In the past twenty years there has been a loss of 8% or 98 houses through these causes and also as a result of the Council's slum clearance programme.

The first part of this programme has been completed and the latest assessment is contained elsewhere in this report. The number of unfit houses has fallen from 137 to 84 and 141 houses have been improved with the help of the various grants.

Even so there is still a great deal to be done. One sixth of the population still have to carry water, more than a half have no bathroom and one-third have no proper closet. The latter problem presents a real danger to health. The old practice, which is still prevalent, of siting the closet over a brook, which may be dry in Summer where flies can breed, and washed in Winter by storms to the farm below, dates from Roman times and should have no place in the modern community.

The natural beauty of the area does not compensate the young for the amenities which the bigger industrial towns offer and depopulation is a chronic ailment belonging to the whole Mid-Wales area. The drift away from the country districts has ensured that there is little unemployment and the lack of a labour force is an important deterring factor in the establishing of a new factory in the area. The industrial site made available by the Council has not yet been utilised.

The level of employment remains essentially the same. Approximately 40% of our population are wholly or partly dependent on agriculture. The Birmingham Corporation Water Department employ more than sixty people locally in connection with its city's water supply. The Rhayader Quarry and Road Transport employ fifty men, and the County Council a further sixty from the district. Nearly fifty are employed by local building contractors, and seventy men and women work at the car accessory firm which is situated in the town in the old workhouse. Others are employed by the Forestry Commission, and at the Ponterwyd Hydro-electric scheme and in the retail and motor trades.

All these deserve credit for making employment available to the resident population.

The children's paddling pool in the park was completed and came into use during the year. This is a great asset to the children's corner. The water will require treatment or more frequent changing if it is not to be a source of potential danger.

The year was exceptionally wet in its last six months. The rainfall for the year was 28% above average.

There was no widespread incidence of illness in the community and its general health remained good.

I am grateful to all members of the Council and Council staff for their help and co-operation throughout the year, and to the Public Health Inspector for his assistance in the preparation of this report.

I remain,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN DAVIES.

## GENERAL STATISTICS

Area of District	...	...	...	...	91,240 acres
Estimated Population (mid 1960)	...	...	...	...	4,220
Number of Inhabited Houses :—					
In Parishes	...	...	...	...	...
Abbeycwmhir	...	...	...	...	68
Cefnlllys Rural	...	...	...	...	24
Llanbadarnfawr	...	...	...	...	150
Llanfihangel Helygen	...	...	...	...	14
Llansantffraed Cwmdeuddwr	...	...	...	...	164
Llanyre (Rural Ward)	...	...	...	...	81
Llanyre (Village Ward)	...	...	...	...	129
Nantmel	...	...	...	...	204
Rhayader	...	...	...	...	338
St. Harmon	...	...	...	...	135
Total					1,307
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	£89,678
Product of a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	£305

## NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The warm saturated winds blowing over Cardigan Bay are forced to rise by the massive hills of the central plateau of the Cambrian Mountains. As they cool in their ascent, they lose their water on the Western edge and top of this range. It is fortunate for Rhayader that it lies on the Eastern edge, for the clouds have lost a great deal of their water by the time they reach the town. We still have an abundant rainfall, but when it is realised that gauges in the Cwmduddwr hills, 6-8 miles to the West, have double the rainfall the favourable position of the town can be appreciated.

1960 was spectacular for the heavy rainfall in the latter part of the year, when there was 6 inches in October, 10.14 inches in November and another 8 inches in December. The heavy storm in early December, falling on already waterlogged ground, resulted in widespread flooding which destroyed or damaged many bridges.

The averages for some previous years are as follows :—

Years	Total Rainfall	Percentage of Long Average
1956	44.38	92
1957	51.62	107
1958	51.26	106



1959	48.22	100
1960	61.45	128

The average rainfall for the British Isles is 30 inches  
Atmospheric pollution is nil.

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## HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

The district is served by one part-time Medical Officer of Health, a Surveyor and Water Engineer and a Public Health Inspector. A Rodent Operator is shared with Knighton Rural District Council.

Bacteriological analyses of milk, water and ice cream are undertaken by the Public Health Laboratory Service, Shrewsbury, whilst chemical analyses are done by the Public Analyst, Carmarthen.

Infant Welfare Clinics are held monthly at Rhayader and Newbridge-on-Wye.

There are hospital outpatient facilities at Llandrindod Wells, Llanidloes, Hereford, Aberystwyth, Shrewsbury and at other hospitals farther afield.

The Nursing Services are administered by the Radnorshire County Council and have been re-organised in the past year. At present there are four nurses resident in the district, the rest of the area is covered from outside. The service has been augmented during the year by the appointment of a Health Visitor who specialises in the welfare of the young and old.

Ambulance Services are provided by the local St. Johns Voluntary Service supplementing the County Authority.

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## VITAL STATISTICS

In the figures following, it will be seen that the still birth rate, at 53.3 per 1,000, is unfavourable when compared with a national average of around 19.7. This is the second successive year that the rate has been high, in 1959 it was 54.5. Because our birthrate is small, every single death gives a large increase. Over the past five years the average rate has been 25.9.

In the same period the natural increase, that is surplus of births over deaths, has been 28. This is not reflected in the total population, for there has been a fall of 60 in this time, making a total loss of 88, probably due to migration to the larger towns.

For the benefit of the new members of the Council, perhaps it should be explained that owing to our large proportion of old persons, comparability factors are given to me by the Registrar General. Thus in arriving at the birth rate, the true births are



multiplied by 1.27, whilst deaths are multiplied by 0.91. This has the effect of increasing the figures for the birth rate and depressing the death rate.

### Live Births

Male—legitimate	34,	illegitimate	1	...	...	...	35
Female—	„	35,	„	1	...	...	36
							—
Total							71
Rate per 1,000 population (corrected)	...	...	...	...	...	...	21.37
Rate for England and Wales	...	...	...	...	...	...	17.1

### Illegitimate Live Births

Per cent of total live births	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.8%
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### Still-births

Male—legitimate	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Female—	„	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
							—
Total							4
Rate per 1,000 total live and still-births	...	...	...	...	...	...	53.3
Rate for England and Wales	...	...	...	...	...	...	19.7

### Total Live and Still-births

Male ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	39
Female	...	...	...	...	...	...	36
							—
Total							75

### Infant Deaths (under 1 year)

Legitimate – Female	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
„ — Male	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Illegitimate	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil

### Infant Mortality Rates

Total infant deaths per 1,000 live births	...	...	...	...	...	...	28.0
„ „ „ (England and Wales)	...	...	...	...	...	...	21.7
Legitimate infant deaths per 1,000 legitimate live births	...	...	...	...	...	...	28.0
Illegitimate infant deaths...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil

### Neo-Natal Mortality Rate

Deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 live births	...	...	...	...	...	...	28.0
For England and Wales (1959)	...	...	...	...	...	...	15.8

### Early Neo-Natal Mortality Rate

Deaths under 1 week per 1,000 live births	...	...	...	...	...	...	28.0
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### Perinatal Mortality Rate

Still-births and deaths under 1 week combined per	...	...	...	...	...	...	80.0
1,000 total live and still-births	...	...	...	...	...	...	80.0
For England and Wales (1959)	...	...	...	...	...	...	34.2

Maternal Mortality	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
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## Births and Deaths in Previous Deaths

Year	Births	Deaths	Corrected Rate per 1,000 pop.	
			Births	Deaths
1955	74	57	22.0	11.1
1956	55	68	16.5	14.5
1957	68	48	20.5	12.7
1958	57	50	17.3	10.7
1959	52	50	15.7	10.8
Total 5 years	306	273		
Average 5 years	61.8	54.6	18.4	11.9
1960	71	52	21.4	11.2
1960 England and Wales			17.1	11.5

## Causes of Death

	Male	Female
Tuberculosis Respiratory ... ..	1	—
Malignant neoplasm —lung, bronchus ... ..	2	—
„ „ —other sites ... ..	2	4
Vascular lesions of nervous system ... ..	7	3
Coronary disease, angina ... ..	7	—
Hypertension with heart disease ... ..	—	1
Other heart disease ... ..	2	2
„ circulatory disease ... ..	—	3
Pneumonia ... ..	1	1
Bronchitis ... ..	3	—
Gastritis, enteritis ... ..	—	1
Nephritis, nephrosis ... ..	1	1
Other defined and ill defined diseases ... ..	3	4
Accidents ... ..	1	1
Suicide ... ..	1	—
	31	21

Circulatory diseases, that is diseases of the heart and blood supply, continue to be the major cause of death, being about 48% of the whole and is a slight increase over previous years. Cancer is the next highest cause of death with a total of over 15%; this should be set against a national average of over 18%.

## Infectious Diseases

There were no outbreaks of infectious diseases or of food poisoning during the year. It is noticeable that the cases reported were isolated as follows:—

Measles	...	1
Scarlet Fever	...	1

**Tuberculosis**

No. of cases on Register :

Pulmonary	...	...	7	6
Non-Pulmonary	...	...	3	1
Total				17

New cases reported ... Nil. Deaths ... 1 Male—Pulmonary

It is good to note that no new cases of Tuberculosis were notified this year. Every other year, for the past ten years, there has been a small number of notifications, perhaps due to early diagnosis in the tuberculosis clinics. There has been, however, a general decline in the total numbers, from 40 in 1951 to 17 today.

**Immunisation**

Figures are not available for immunisation and vaccination against diphtheria, whooping cough and small pox, but it is known that these are still being given by family doctors, and in the two clinics which are held monthly in the district.

The age limit for polio immunisation has now been extended to 40 and there has been a fair response.

**National Assistance Act, 1948—Section 47**

I am authorised by you to take action under this Act. No action, however, was necessary during the year.

**Blindness**

No action was taken under Section 176 of the Public Health Act, 1936.

**PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTION**

An approximate summary of total visits paid for various aspects of Public Health is as follows:—

				Total Visits
Housing—				
Allocation of Council Houses	...	...	...	61
Unfit Houses (Housing Act Visits)	...	...	...	50
Rent Act	...	...	...	19
Survey	...	...	...	105
Improvement Grants	...	...	...	89
Improvement of Hill Farms...	...	...	...	61
Public Health Act—				
Drainage, various visits	...	...	...	62

Drainage, conversion grants	...	...	...	4
Housing defects	...	...	...	26
Offensive refuse	...	...	...	9
Nuisance from animals	...	...	...	22
Caravans	...	...	...	52
Water supplies—public	...	...	...	1
farms	...	...	...	60
other houses	...	...	...	22
Rats and mice	...	...	...	45
Other pests	...	...	...	37
Old persons welfare	...	...	...	3
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	85
Factories Acts	...	...	...	18
Petroleum Regulations	...	...	...	85
Food Inspection etc.	...	...	...	...
Meat inspection	...	...	...	315
Public Houses	...	...	...	51
Cafes, hotels	...	...	...	18
Food shops	...	...	...	52
Milk Supplies	...	...	...	5
Bakehouses	...	...	...	7
Total				1,364
Samples—Water	...	...	...	33
No. of complaints received	...	...	...	80
" " " in which no action was taken	...	...	...	12
" " " remedied by informal action	...	...	...	56
" " " not yet remedied	...	...	...	12
No statutory action was taken under Public Health Acts				

## Housing

Action was taken as follows:—

No. of houses demolished	...	...	...	—
Unfit houses closed	...	...	...	7
" " made fit after informal action	10			

In early 1959 the results of the rural housing survey were published. Owing to the large amount of modernisation being carried out, and to the slum clearance programme, this position is not static and the following is a summary to date compared with the earlier survey:—

## 1959

Parish	Grade					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Abbeycwmhir	13	3	28	22	7	73
Cefnlllys Rural	4	1	8	7	7	27
Llanbadarnfawr	58	2	51	25	20	156
Llanfihangel Helygen	2	—	8	4	1	15
Llansantffraed Cwmdeuddwr	86	1	46	27	21	181
Llanyre (Whole Parish)	77	4	85	44	8	218
Nantmel	43	10	86	51	30	220
Rhayader	189	10	68	40	35	342
St. Harmon	27	1	71	36	8	143
Totals	499	32	451	256	137	1,375
Percentage	35%	2%	33%	19%	10%	

## 1960

Parish	Grade					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Abbeycwmhir	18	2	25	23	3	71
Cefnlllys Rural	8	—	7	8	4	27
Llanbadarnfawr	61	2	48	36	8	155
Llanfihangel Helygen	2	—	8	4	—	14
Llansantffraed Cwmdeuddwr	88	—	43	32	12	175
Llanyre (Whole Parish)	81	4	83	48	1	217
Nantmel	47	7	82	57	17	210
Rhavader	202	4	77	28	33	344
St. Harmon	34	2	62	38	6	142
Totals	541	21	435	274	84	1,355
Percentages	40%	2%	32%	20%	6%	

Of the 137 in Category 5 in 1959, 30 have been closed, a number have been upgraded and the figure now stands at 84. More than a third of these are in the town of Rhayader and it is hoped that the proposed new scheme for 45 houses will solve this part of the problem.

On a national basis discretionary grants were not taken up to any great extent. In this district, however, 51 grants have been appoved. Standard grants are newer and do not require such a high standard. 21 houses have been, or will be, improved with the aid of this grant.

In the past ten years it is estimated that 49 farms have been completely modernised and that 20 more have been partly improved with grant aid under Hill Farming Improvement Acts. These Acts come to a finish in 1963.

## Destruction of Rats and Mice

The rodent operator is shared with Knighton Rural District Council. He works a total of 18 weeks annually in each district, on the basis of one week in two in Winter, and one week in four in Summer.

Occasionally there is difficulty in arranging a prompt visit, especially in Summer. However, on the whole the system works satisfactorily.

The record of treatment etc. is as follows. It will be seen from this the bulk of the work is needed on farms :—

	Type of Property				
	Council Premises	Dwelling Houses	Business	Farms	Total
Number in District	19	825	242	421	1507
No. inspected	6	58	26	218	308
No. infested with rats or mice	3	16	10	42	71
Total treatments during year	6	21	10	53	90

## Meat Inspection

	Cattle not Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep	Pigs
No. killed	23	6	1	505	64
No. inspected	23	6	1	505	64

### Condemnations

All diseases except T.B. and Cysticerci

Whole carcasses	1	—	—	8	—
Part carcasses	16	6	—	174	1
Percentage affected	73%	100%	—	36%	1½%

### Tuberculosis only

Whole carcasses	—	—	—	—	—
Part carcasses	—	—	—	—	2
Percentage affected	—	—	—	—	3%

There were no cases of Cysticercosis

There are five butchers with retail businesses in the district. Only three of these have ever killed their own animals during the past few years. The rate of killing has been getting progressively slower, and the following are comparative figures reduced to units for convenience :—



1953	2,071 units
1957	1,259 „
1959	1,186 „
1960	775 „

The only slaughterhouse is occupied and managed by the Council. The premises are below standard and in submitting the slaughterhouse report the Council have decided to relinquish the lease on 31st March, 1962. The construction regulations will apply as from 1st April, 1963, thus allowing a new occupier a year in which to comply. The report was received by the Ministry with no comments.

This is the third successive year without tuberculosis in cattle, undoubtedly due to the T.T. scheme. The results are extremely gratifying when it is realised that before the war nearly a fifth of all cows were affected and a large proportion of other cattle. Two pigs were found to have tuberculous heads.

One whole beast's carcase and eight sheep were condemned from various causes. The other condemnations were mainly offal but there were many heads and part carcases destroyed.

Total weight condemned was 1,017 lbs.

The removal of offal is a sore problem and is taken by the local hunt for feeding dogs.

## **Other Foods**

The numbers and types of food premises in the district are

Grocers	39
Butchers	5
Public Houses	22
Bakehouses	4
Hotels	20
Cafe's, restaurants	6
School Canteens	11

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Total 107

No lectures were given on food hygiene, but literature and posters were distributed to food traders for display.

## **Water Supplies**

All water undertakings are owned by the Council and are under the control of the Surveyor and Water Engineer.

There are eleven separate works, seven of which are treated with chlorine before distribution. All the supplies are plumbo solvent but little or no lead pipes are used, nearly all services being in copper and recently alkathene.

The results of the 138 bacteriological samples taken during the year are as follows:—

Supply	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total Samples	Remarks
Pantydwr	14	6	20	Treated
Nantmel	4	7	11	Untreated & insufficient
Gaufron	8	4	12	"
Clewedog, Crosssgates				Treated by Birmingham Corporation Water Department
Gwystre, etc.	11	—	11	Untreated
Bwlchysarnau	8	2	10	"
Abbeycwmhir	8	2	10	Treated
Newbridge-on-Wye	7	4	11	"
Llanyre	14	3	17	"
Rhayader	17	8	25	"
St. Heliers	7	2	9	Treated by Llandrindod Wells U.D.C.
Fron	2	—	2	Treated by Birmingham Corporation Water Department
	100	38	138	

At the time of the last survey, 56% of the houses were taking water from public supplies. This figure should now read 65%. This means that about a third of the population receive their water from private sources, and about a half of these are not piped. Some of the supplies have been improved and protected as a result of grant aid but it can be safely said that there is little improvement without the impetus of a subsidy. In the main, the sources are in such positions as to be reasonably safe, but many are extremely poor and inadequate in quantity and quality.

Parish	No. of Houses	Public Mains		Private Sources
		Piped	Standpipes	
Abbeycwmhir	68	21	—	47
Cefnlllys Rural	24	—	—	24
Llanbadarnfawr	150	129	5	16
Llanfihangel Helygen	14	9	—	5
Llansantffraed				
Cwmdeuddwr	164	106	6	52
Llanyre	210	178	4	28
Nantmel	204	67	3	134
Rhayader	338	303	35	—
St. Harmon	135	40	1	94
Total	1,307	853	54	390
Percentages		65%	4%	31%

## **Refuse Collection**

Collection is made as follows :—

Rhayader, Cwmdeuddwr and Elan Valley—twice weekly

Newbridge-on-Wye, Doldowlod, Llanyre, Crossgates, Penybont and Nantmel—weekly

St. Harmon, Pantydwr, Nantmel, Bwlchysarnau, Abbeycwmhir, Llangurig Road and Tylwch --fortnightly

## **Public Cemetery**

Of the 52 deaths in the year, nine were buried in the Council's public cemetery.

## **Public Conveniences**

The Council have public conveniences at Rhayader, Cwmdeuddwr and the Cemetery, whilst the Birmingham Corporation have three conveniences in the area of the lakes.

## **Sewerage**

There are modern plants at Newbridge-on-Wye, Crossgates, and Rhayader.

## **Public Swimming Pools**

The paddling pool for infants was completed during the year at Rhayader Park. There is no chlorination plant and some complaints were received of the state of the water. Samples taken at this time were unsatisfactory. Some work was done on the manual addition of chlorine. This, and more frequent changing of the water gave more satisfactory results. Perhaps a small dosing plant should be the next requirement.

Older children bathe in the river. Provided the storm water overflow above the pool generally used is kept satisfactory there should be only a slight risk. I say this advisedly, because samples taken of the river were also unsatisfactory.

## Factories Act, 1937

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspections (3)	Written notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	2	2	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	19	16	—	—
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	—	—	—	—
Total	21	18	—	—

Particulars  (1)	Number in which defects were found				No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted  (6)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	To H.M. Inspector (4)	Referred By H.M. Inspector (5)	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	2	2	—	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2)	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation (S.4)	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient	1	1	—	1	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	2	—	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	—	—	—	—	—
Total	5	3	—	1	—

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